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AFTER TWITTER, META MULLS LARGE-SCALE LAYOFFS: REPORT

Facebook's parent firm, which has around 87,000 employees, will start issuing pink slips this week, The Wall Street Journal reported

ONE OF THE LARGEST JOB CUTS IN BIG TECH

WSJ said the layoffs could come by Wednesday, adding that all staff have already been told to cancel nonessential travel beginning this week. The number of Meta employees losing their jobs could be the largest to date at a major technology corporation in a retrenchment year. It would also be the first broad head-count reductions in the firm's 18-year history, it added

META CEO HAD DROPPED HINTS LAST MONTH

- Last month, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg had said the company's focus would be "small number of high-priority growth areas"
- "Some teams will grow meaningfully, but most others will stay flat or shrink over," he said, adding that "There are probably a bunch of people at the company who shouldn't be here." | P15

70%

FALL IN META'S SHARE PRICE THIS YEAR AS ITS SPENDING SPREE SPOOKED INVESTORS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

3 Ayes, 2 Nays. EWS quota upheld

Minority verdict by CJI and Justice Bhat says it violates basic structure of the Constitution

SHRUTI KAKKAR @New Delhi

IN a landmark verdict on Monday, the Supreme Court by 3:2 majority upheld the the 103rd Constitutional Amendment that granted 10% reservation to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) in admission to public and private educational institutions and recruitment in central government jobs.

Since the EWS excluded socially and economically backward classes (SEBCs)/OBCs/SCs/STs from its ambit, the legal question was whether it violated the basic structure of the Constitution and the equality code. While justices Dinesh Maheshwari, Bela M Trivedi and J B Pardiwala found the EWS quota kosher, Chief Justice of India U U Lalit and Justice S R Bhat called the amendment unconstitutional.

"The impugned amendment and the classification creates, is arbitrary, and results in hostile discrimination of the poorest sections of the society that are socially and educationally backward, and/or subjected to caste discrimination. For these reasons, the insertion of Article 15(6) and 16(6) is struck down, is held to be violative of the equality code, particularly the principle of non-discrimination and non-exclusion which forms an inextricable part of the basic structure of the Constitution," the minority opinion said.

But Justice Maheshwari opined that since reservation is an enabling provision, it could not be regarded as an essential feature of the Constitution and thus the doctrine of basic structure could not be invoked against it.

"Exclusion of the classes covered by Articles 15(4), 15(5) and 16(4) (SEBCs/OBCs/SCS/STS) from getting the benefit of reservation as EWS, being in the nature of balancing the requirements of non-discrimination and compensatory discrimination, does not violate Equality Code," he said.

Justice Trivedi said the amendment created a separate class of "economically weaker sections of the citizens" from the general/unreserved class, without affecting the special rights of reservations provided to the SCs/STs and backward classes. Underscoring the need to lay emphasis on revisiting the system of reservation in the larger interest of the society, she said, "We need to revisit the system of reservation in the larger interest of the society as a whole, as a step forward towards transformative constitutionalism."

Justice Pardiwala said the amendment signifies Parliament's intention to expand affirmative action to hitherto untouched groups.

"If economic advance can be accepted to negate certain social disadvantages for the OBCs [Creamy Layer concept] the converse would be equally relevant," he said.

Justice Bhat in the 101-page judgment for himself and the CJI said, "Introducing the economic basis for reservation — as a new criterion, is permissible. Yet, the "othering" of socially and educationally disadvantaged classes — including SCs/ STs/ OBCs by excluding them from this new reservation on the ground that they enjoy pre-existing benefits, is to heap fresh injustice based on past disability." P9

WHO STANDS WHERE IN CONSTITUTION BENCH

Treating EWS as separate class would be a reasonable classification. Just as equals cannot be treated unequally, unequals cannot be treated equally... The exclusion of SEBCs cannot be said as discriminatory or violative of Constitution
JUSTICE BELA M TRIVEDI
Reservation is an instrument ... not only for inclusion of socially and educationally backward classes... Reservations for EWS does not violate basic structure on account of 50% ceiling limit because ceiling limit is not inflexible
JUSTICE DINESH MAHESHWARI
This court has for the first time, in the seven decades of the republic, sanctioned an avowedly exclusionary and discriminatory principle....Our Constitution does not permit exclusion and this amendment undermines the fabric of social justice and thereby the basic structure. This amendment is deluding us to believe that those getting social and backward class benefits are somehow better placed. This court has held that 16(1) and (4) are facets of the same equality principle... The exclusion is based on social origin which destroys the equality code
JUSTICE U U LALIT
JUSTICE S RAVINDRA BHAT
This amendment also shows how a progressive democratic legislature does not hesitate even to amend the Constitution with a view to harmonise the fundamental rights of the individual citizen with the claims of social good
JUSTICE J B PARDIWALA

CM WELCOMES VERDICT

CM Basavaraj Bommai on Monday welcomed the Supreme Court verdict upholding 10 per cent reservation to EWS, saying this will ensure inclusive growth, and is a ray of hope for the upper caste poor.

Fugitive arms dealer Bhandari's extradition approved by UK court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@New Delhi

IN a move that could pave the way for extradition of Sanjay Bhandari, a UK-based Indian arms dealer accused of tax evasion and kickbacks in a weapons deal, a London court on Monday ruled that he can be sent to India to face the charges. District Judge Michael Snow, who heard the case at Westminster Magistrates' Court earlier this year, concluded that nothing barred his extradition to India and forwarded the case to Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who is authorised to sign on the extradition order.

CBI, ED after him

Bhandari allegedly influenced Pilatus Aircraft to make payments into the account of his Dubai-based Offset India Solutions, to garner the ₹2,895 cr deal

Bhandari, who is likely to challenge the order, is accused of defrauding Indian income tax authorities between July 1, 2015 and February 7, 2017, by deliberately omitting foreign assets and income. In January 2022, there were reports that Bhandari's Dubai-based Offset India Solutions was found to be linked to a €2.4 billion IAF Mirage fighter jet upgradation deal in 2011 and another ₹3,600 crore agreement for acquiring helicopters from UK's Agusta Westland in 2009.

Bhandar is also accused of money laundering.

According to the extradition papers, Bhandari was a middleman in the Pilatus trainer aircraft deal and paid kickbacks to Indian Air Force officers and defence ministry officials to influence the decision to purchase 75 basic trainer aircraft from the Swiss manufacturer in 2009.

Bhandari left India after a case was filed against him under the Official Secrets Act in October 2016, based on the recovery of confidential defence ministry documents during an I-T department raid at his residence. He was arrested four years later in London on July 15, 2020, following an extradition request from India.

POCSO CASE

Partial chargesheet against seer

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chitradurga

THE district police have filed a partial chargesheet against Murugha Mutt seer Dr Shivamurthy Murugha Shanaru, hostel warden Rashmi and former secretary of the SJM educational institutions Paramashivaiah in a Pocso case based on the allegations by two minor girls of the hostel run by the mutt.

Addressing media persons, SP K Parashuram said on Monday that investigation is still going on against the third accused, who is a minor, and the fifth accused Gangadharaiah, an advocate. "A complete chargesheet will be filed after completion of the probe," he said.

The SP, however, refused to comment on the issue of children being given drugged fruits and sacred water, saying the matter is under FSL investigation. He said FSL authorities have submitted some reports and more reports are awaited.

On allegations against the seer of rape and murder of a child, whose body was found on railway tracks at Hindupura in Andhra Pradesh, the SP said that it was an accident and the case has been closed. Parashuram said if there are more victims, they can come forward. The district police have also taken the help of the Child Welfare Committee and Odanadi organisation in the probe.

Satish Jarkiholi under fire for his 'dirty' take on 'Hindu' word

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Belagavi

KPCC working president **Satish Jarkiholi** has come under fire from various quarters, including his own party, for calling "Hindu" a "dirty" word. He was trying to interpret the origin of the word 'Hindu' while addressing a gathering at a programme organised by Manava Bandutva Vedike at Nipani on Monday.

The ruling BJP, terming Congress as "anti-Hindu", questioned if his statement is the party's stand too. "Is Congress trying to consolidate its vote bank by speaking against Hinduism?" BJP tweeted.

Besides leaders from various parties, AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka, Randeep Singh Surjewala, also condemned Jarkiholi's statement in strong terms, saying on Twitter: "The statement attributed to Satish Jarkiholi is deeply unfortunate and deserves to be rejected."

He posted, "We condemn it unequivocally. Hinduism is a way of life and a civilisation reality. Congress built our nation to respect every religion, belief and faith. This is essence of India (sic)."

While attempting to hit out at those involved in doing communal politics in the name of Hindu and other religions, Jarkiholi said in Nipani, "Where did the word 'Hindu' come from? It is not our word, but originated from Persia, which had earlier spread in Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. How is this region linked to India and how did the word 'Hindu' become your word? Check on WhatsApp, Wikipedia...the term is not yours. If you come to know the meaning of it, you will be ashamed. Its meaning is very dirty. The word Hindu is being imposed on us." P6

SURJEWALA CONDEMNS REMARK

AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka, Randeep Singh Surjewala, condemned Jarkiholi's statement on Twitter, saying: "The statement attributed to Satish Jarkiholi deserves to be rejected."

FAST AND SMOOTH

Vande Bharat completed its maiden trial run on Monday, reaching Mysuru from Chennai in 6 hours and 36 minutes | UDAYASHANKAR S | P2

EXPRESS READ

Govt wooing voters through 2 big projects

Bengaluru: Eyeing the 2023 Assembly polls, the state government is likely to launch two ambitious housing projects in December and expects to get Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the inauguration on December 2. The first is a scheme to build one lakh houses for the urban poor and the other is a residential township at Suryanagar on Bengaluru outskirts | P4

Ex-IB officer's murder: Neighbour under lens

Mysuru: With the city police establishing that the hit-and-run death of retired Intelligence Bureau officer R N Kulkarni was in fact a planned murder, the investigation has now turned to the role of the victim's neighbour in the case. Police have also taken three people into custody for interrogation. A source said the special team has shifted its focus to neighbour's involvement | P3

Educate boys against sex with minor girls: HC

Bengaluru: The Karnataka HC has recommended that boys, especially in Class 9 and above, be educated on the consequences of love affairs leading to charges of rape and sexual assault under the IPC and Pocso Act. Lack of knowledge of the law is no excuse, the court said, directing the education department's principal secretary to form a panel to work on material to educate students | P3

Boy hurt in road rage may lose vision, accused at large even after a month

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

ELEVEN-year-old Aditya (name changed), a class 5 student, faces the risk of losing vision in his right eye which was injured in a road rage incident. He has already received 20 stitches on his cornea. Aditya sustained the injury after a broken window glass piece pierced his right eyeball during an assault by a scooterist on October 15. What is baffling is that it's been almost a month and the accused is still at large.

The boy was sitting in the back seat when the scooterist broke the car's window. The victim's father filed a complaint at the Jayanagar Police Station.

Aditya, along with his parents, had gone to a hotel. His father, a software engineer, had parked his car on 11th Main in Jayanagar IV 'T' block. After they returned around 7 pm, the boy's father was unable to remove his car as a scooter was blocking the way. The accused, who is an engineering student refused to remove his vehicle. When the techie tried to take the car out, it hit the scooter which fell down. Enraged by this, the accused ran behind the car and smashed its left rear windowpane. A glass piece pierced the boy's eye. "The scooterist was extremely arrogant and rude. After I took my son to an eye hospital, the staff of the hospital themselves registered a medico-legal case and informed the matter to the jurisdictional Jayanagar police," the boy's father told *TNIE*. P3

KIA EXPANSION

₹13K cr pumped into Terminal 2, related infra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

AN investment of over ₹13,000 crore has been pumped into the massive expansion planned for the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), the first phase of which will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday morning. This covers Terminal 2, the second runway, a multimodal transport hub, expansion of access roads and internal road infrastructure. A spokesperson of airport operator, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) told *The New Indian Express*, "We are looking at operating domestic aircraft initially. We will gradually start operating international ones too," she said.

While the first phase of the second terminal will add 25 million passengers, the second phase will add 20 million passengers, the spokesperson added. The total terminal area will be 2,55,645 square metres with 17 security check-in lanes.

An artist's impression of the upcoming Terminal 2 at KIA

There will be a seating capacity for 5,932 in the gate lounge seating.

"The second terminal is a dedication to the beautiful city of Bengaluru," she said. T2 is set to be an architectural wonder with lush greenery within and outside. "It will be an innovative experience at various points by providing calming gardens in areas of high stress," the spokesperson added. CONTINUED ON: P2

Sisodia's aide Arora to turn approver in Delhi excise scam

AMIT MUKHERJEE @New Delhi

IN a setback to the Aam Aadmi Party ahead of the Gujarat elections, Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's close aide and a co-accused in the Delhi excise policy case, Dinesh Arora, has moved the special court to turn an approver. In his application before special judge M K Nagpal, Arora said he has taken the step on his own volition and not due to any coercion or influence.

In its response, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the alleged excise policy scam, told the court that it has no objection to Arora turning approver adding that he "cooperated" with the agency during the investigation.

The special court is expected to record Arora's statement on November 14, the next date of hearing.

CONGRESS

Local court says block party's Twitter handles

A commercial court for Bengaluru Urban district on Monday directed Twitter to block the handles of Congress and its Bharat Jodo Yatra after a suit filed by MRT Music, copyright holder of 'KGF Chapter 2', alleged infringement | P4